

# Clergy Continuing Education for Adaptive Technology

AN EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

## **RATIONALE:**

On January 30, 2020 the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic. This declaration was in response to a novel coronavirus outbreak that became known as COVID-19. The ensuing outbreak has had an unprecedented impact on society as we knew it, including on the life of our places of worship. Social Distancing regulations put in place to attempt to mitigate the spread of the disease has forced clergy to find new ways of keeping their charge connected to one another. Because these connections have taken a virtual form, clergy members have needed to stretch their education.

¶1302 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* (BOD) speaks about the calling of pastors from the apostolic model to prayer, teaching and preaching, and ordering the spiritual and temporal life of the community. Clergy who continue to lead their congregations virtually have had to learn many new skills: Managing live-stream of worship services with minimal support staff, hosting small groups via video-calls, and simply carrying out the ministries and organization of the church.

¶1334.2.d. of the 2016 BOD requires the Board of Ordained Ministry to set forth the requirements for continued education. The purpose of this request is therefore to honor the adaptive leadership shown by clergy members of the Virginia Annual Conference by awarding Continued Education Units. These CEU's would be available for clergy members who have responded to the unique times we are by learning new technology in order to maintain a pastoral presence.

## **THE PLAN:**

The CEU's would be substantiated through a plan that acknowledges the diversity of online learning opportunities available, the trustworthiness of the intentions of our clergy leadership, and the flexibility required amid our current global reality.

We acknowledge that each clergy member is gifted differently and has a unique set of needs for technology continued education, which may require differing hours to learn the same technological skill. Therefore, the proposal is to award CEU's on a point system:

<b>Continuing Education Units</b>	<b>Non-Interactive Training</b>	<b>Interactive Training</b>
0.1 (1 Point)	30 Minutes (0.5 Hours)	60 Minutes (1.0 Hours)
1.0 (10 Points)	300 Minutes (5.0 Hours)	600 Minutes (10.0 Hours)

One “point” would be equal to 30 minutes (0.5 hours) of time spent learning through online webinars (non-interactive material). One “point” would be equal to 60 minutes (1.0 hours) of direct training (interactive material), such as training received in person or over the phone.

The list below details specific skills listed with point values based on experience and an understanding of what we believe to be an efficient amount of time to learn said skill. (This is no different than the automotive industry assigning labor hours to a car being worked on, regardless of how long the automotive tech actually uses). This list is non-exhaustive, but provides a template for implementation of this proposal. Clergy members would submit their CEU forms online. This form can be created by the Center of Clergy Excellence in whichever medium they choose.

Skill	Example(s)	Points Awarded
Digital Worship	Zoom, Facebook, Youtube, Etc.	8
Editing Video/Audio	Pre-recorded worship, Social Media	8
Establishing Online Giving	VANCO, Paypal, GiveHub, Etc.	6
Creating E-Communications	Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Etc.	6
Social Media (Increased presence via more posts, devotionals, etc)	Facebook, Facebook Groups, Instagram, Twitter	4
Video Calls	Zoom, Google Meet, Skype	4
Training Laity or other Clergy	Teaching above skills	1 per 0.5 hours

The following questions can be included to substantiate learning as well:

1. What did you learn that applies to your ministry setting? What “aha” moments did you have?
2. How will this change influence the way you lead in ministry?
3. How will you maintain proficiency for the activities learned? What support or resources do you need?
4. As a result, what further areas of technology learning would you like to explore? What additional questions do you have?

## CONCLUSION

I, and those signed below, believe our clergy have done an excellent job of overcoming challenges that were placed before them. This time period, though a solemn time in history, has also proven a fruitful time for clergy and church leaders to lead in the technological world we live in. I hope that you would accept this request to allow now for those clergy members

who have stepped up to learn new things for the purpose of furthering ministry to be awarded needed continued education units for ministry.

- Submitted by Rev. Joshua S. King, Elder in Full Connection
  - Rev. Sean Devolites, Provisional Elder (Co-Signer)
- Kim Johnson, Arlington/Alexandria District Communications Coordinator (Co-Signer)
  - Rev. Michelle Matthews, Lead Pastor, The Kingstowne Communion (Co-Signer)